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Campaigners to Biden: Environmental justice key to tackling climate change

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U.S. President-elect Joe Biden must place environmental justice at the heart of his plans to tackle climate change by tailoring policies to address the global inequalities at the root of the crisis, guests in a Reuters Next panel said on Thursday.

Biden has pledged to return the United States to a leadership role in climate diplomacy by rejoining the 2015 Paris accord, and spend \$2 trillion on projects to decarbonize the economy while creating thousands of jobs.

The United States' role as the world's biggest historical emitter of planet-warming gases gave the country a special responsibility to remedy the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries, marginalized communities, women and indigenous peoples, participants from campaign groups said.

"We know to be able to solve the climate crisis we need to mobilize resources on an emergency scale," said Mohamed Adow, director of Power Shift Africa, a think-tank in Nairobi. "And so a narrative that includes and explains justice is essential to justify this support and its scale."

Adow pointed to an Obama-era pledge to contribute \$3 billion to a fund to help developing countries respond to climate change, of which only \$1 billion has been delivered.

The United States now had an opportunity to heed calls from climate justice movements around the world to push for a fundamental transformation of the global economy, said Osprey Orielle Lake, founder and executive director of the California-based Women's Earth and Climate Action Network International.

"The climate crisis really emerged from interlocking systems of capitalism, resource extraction, racism, patriarchy and colonization," Lake said. "It's beyond past time to end the tragic cycle of endless economic growth based on sacrificed peoples and sacrificed lands."

Environmental justice would also mean wealthy countries doing more to help vulnerable countries and communities build resilience, said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford.

"When thinking about fighting climate change, it's not just about stopping emissions," Otto said. "It's also about building resilience, and empowering and giving agency to deal with the impacts of climate change to these affected communities."

For more coverage from the Reuters Next conference please click here or www.reuters.com/business/reuters-next
To watch Reuters Next live, visit <https://www.reutersevents.com/events/next/register.php>

Campaigners to Biden: Environmental justice key to tackling climate change

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